

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE WORLD OF ART



"ANNIE," BY RANDALL DAVEY.
In the Macbeth Galleries.



"THE BEACH HAT," BY ROBERT HENRI.
Courtesy of the Macbeth Galleries.



"MAN AND MONKEY," BY RANDALL DAVEY.
In the Macbeth Galleries.

TO those who are at all instructed in the technique of painting, and this includes such amateurs as are sensitive to the method of an artist, it is sufficiently apparent in the reproduction of the still life by Samuel Halpert upon this page that this artist knows how to draw and yet has disdained certain rules for draughtsmanship that are laid down in the school books.

The perspective of the table is in the reverse of conventional perspective. The guilty edge of the table top that goes for you instead of away from you is in shadow, but any professor of the old school would notice it instantly to the exclusion of all else that is in the picture. A professor of the new school, on the other hand, would regard this line affectionately,

rule of course, although none of them could paint with Mr. Halpert's power or with his command over decorative line.

Childe Hassam has been conspicuous as an American artist for many years. He is one of the chief members of the illustrious band who taught Americans the secret of French "impressionism." He is a member of "The Ten," impressionists who still give exhibitions that they wish regarded as separate in spirit from the Academy's shows. In addition he is probably the most regular exhibitor before the American public, sending not only to "The Ten" but to both Fall and Spring Academies, to such chance exhibitions as happen along, and usually to a special show of his work in some dealer's gallery.

Mr. Davey is Robert Henri's pupil—his star pupil, for Mr. Henri always has had pupils, and now that he is an instructor in the Art Students League he has a larger clientele than ever. All these pupils flock to the show and help to create atmosphere. Mr. Davey's exhibition has had more "atmosphere" than any other so far in the young season.

The joint exhibition of Mr. Davey and Mr. Lever has already been reviewed in THE SUN, but the photographs give an opportunity to compare the work of the pupil, Mr. Davey, and his master, Mr. Henri. Mr. Henri has recently been astonishing the Chicago people with his Indian and Chinese paintings which we saw last spring.

The obvious differences between the two that strike one at the first glance are that the younger man does not yet draw with the brush security of his instructor, but on the other hand is already capable of greater tenderness, particularly in the representation of children.

Neither artist does much in the way of interpretation. Both have been mentally affected by the ocean of

photographs that accompanies present day existence, and the view they take of the model is the view that the average man of the street takes. They don't pretend to poetize, and the model is planted before a plain flat curtain without folds and is painted as tellingly as both men can.

Mr. Henri's method is the more forceful because he has more command over form, construction and the other items in the convention of drawing. The brush strokes flow over the canvas, stopping at just the right places to indicate with clear and sometimes hard precision the bones, the lips, the folds of a fat lady's chin or the placement of an ear. He draws and he uses drawing as a means of expression. If he is content to express attributes that are rather obvious that is a handicap no doubt that he consciously puts upon himself, and can in no way be attributed to his schooling. An artist must be aware of the class of society to which he makes his appeal.

But there is a wide difference between the drawing of Halpert and that of Davey, as illustrated upon this page. Halpert is a man who knows drawing and in this instance disregards it in order to make what he regards as a more important effect.

Davey's "Organ Grinder" is the work of a man who has not yet considered it necessary to learn to draw. The hands, the neck, the straps of the organ, countless little items everywhere in the picture betray an indifference to draughtsmanship. The organ grinder has, however, received a great deal of praise from the students who have flocked to see it. Absolute precision of drawing has never been held by THE SUN's chronicler as infallibly necessary to works of art. Many famous painters have succeeded in spite of weaknesses in this direction. It will be in consequence interesting to see if Mr. Davey succeeds in permanently capturing public favor without much draughtsmanship or whether he himself will bend, in the desire for a wider audience, to the study of this branch of technique.

The director in chief and founder of the Russian ballet company, M. Serge de Diaghileff, has leased the estate of Belle Rive at Ouchy, Switzerland. There he was visited recently by Leon Bakst, who remained with him for a fortnight or so. Bakst is at present engaged upon the complete remounting of Stravinsky's "Fire-Bird," which is to be provided with entirely fresh staging and scenery expressly for the tour in the United States. He is also arranging new versions of "Scheherazade" and "Les Sylphides," which, like the "Fire-

Bird," were among the earlier productions of M. de Diaghileff's company, and continue to prove as attractive as any.

Bakst has quite recovered his health, which some time ago, as he says, was not "up to sample." He reports, indeed, that having—probably from habit—replied to the question addressed to him as he traveled from Paris—"Why are you going to Switzerland?"—that it was on account of his health, his interrogator walked round and round him suspiciously for a considerable time, remarking at intervals, "But, my faith, you don't look ill!"

His thoughts are at present a good deal occupied with an ingenious series of forgeries of which he and others have been the victims. It is pretty widely known that the *Tatler* of London was taken in by a clever impostor who sold to it four pictures as genuine works by Leon Bakst. These were published as such on February 3 of this year together with an article under the heading "The Amazing Bakst"—as the artist recounts with keen appreciation!

Upon the discovery that all of these pictures were "forged" the *Tatler* made all amends possible, and, like Bakst himself, tried to get upon the track of the ingenious scoundrel who had victimized it.

Recently it has been brought to light that an eminent collector who has already many of Leon Bakst's works

in his gallery was induced by a plausible story of financial difficulties caused in Russia by the war to purchase no less than twelve water colors "by Bakst" and signed duly by that artist, all of which turn out to be fakes. Naturally he is furious, and every effort is being made to trace the swindler.

Such a thing could hardly happen except at a time like the present, but Bakst is only afraid that others may have been or will be similarly deceived in England or perhaps in the United States, the sketches being rather ingeniously made to deceive any but a very experienced critic, and the signatures being, as he says, "real works of art"; so good that he could not tell them from his own. He has already let it be known in England that he is willing to tell any one who furnishes him with a photograph of any sketch offered for sale as his whether it is or is not genuine, and he hopes that in all cases in which the authenticity of the work is not absolutely undoubted collectors will thus communicate with him.

Fortunately indignation at these frauds has in no way destroyed Bakst's sense of humor, and as usual immediately upon his arrival at Ouchy he became the life of the company, starting to teach Massin how to dance and an Englishman the proper way to box.

Since he possesses a personality strikingly individual, as well as artistic, it is good news that his friend M. de Diaghileff has persuaded him to make the tour to the United States next January with the company. Bakst's last whimsical fad has been to develop a passion for the cinematograph, upon which he held forth at length, declaring it to be the most artistic enterprise of our day. "Next to the Russian Ballet, of course," he added, with side glances at Diaghileff and his fellow artist, the stalwart Larianof, who chanced to be on either side of him.

He mentioned that during the previous forty-eight days in Paris he had been to the cinema forty times. "For," as he said, "the whole tendency of modern art in all its many forms is toward directness and rapidity of expression, and where can one find these qualities better developed than at the cinema, where in ten minutes one can see the whole of a drama that would take three hours to perform upon the stage of a theatre?" To prove his point he then and there insisted upon the whole company going with him to the nearest performance.

With regard to the new settings upon which Leon Bakst is at present engaged it will be especially interesting to see what he makes of the popular "Fire-Bird," the picturesque plot of which should provide unusual opportunities for his highly original genius.

Ernest Lawson, the impressionist, joined a group of fellow artists one day this week, and, blushing with pleasure, announced:

"Say, fellows, I think perhaps at last I am really arrived. I have just been up to the Metropolitan Museum and I found an old lady copying my picture."

"Why don't you buy it from her, sign it and sell it at a profit?" coldly remarked one of Mr. Lawson's rivals, entirely unmoved by the event.

"Perhaps he pays the old lady to copy his picture for the sake of the 'ad,'" remarked another.

"Say, what's to prevent a fellow from going up there and copying his own picture?" said an Academician, getting excited at last. "There's no law against it, is there?"

"One might learn something even at that," replied Lawson. "Often when you see one of your pictures after a few years you wonder how you did it; also why you did it!"

For additional art news see page 7, section 3, of this issue.



STILL LIFE, BY SAMUEL HALPERT.
Courtesy of the Daniel Gallery.

holding it a proof that the artist was living in this era; that is, the era that has been influenced by Cezanne.

All of the mere facts in the case of the table are not considered to be of equal importance by Halpert. There are advanced artists "of the period" who consider that none of the facts is important. But Halpert apparently is not averse to facts just because they are facts. He reports the truth in regard to the light, the solidity of things and their color, with almost literal respect.

He changed the table top's perspective merely to improve the composition. It is only necessary for some little boy or girl in the high school drawing classes to change this bad perspective into mechanically true perspective to ruin the picture. Any little boy or girl in the high school classes could draw this table according to

Thanks to this incessant production and to his continued ability to get it noticed, his work is probably as well known to the general public as that of any painter we have.

For that reason the announcement that this artist has embarked upon a new line of work will awaken widespread interest. It seems that more or less in secret he has taken up etching. Keppell & Co. discovered this fact, and when they saw the impressions they promptly became enthusiastic over Mr. Hassam, the etcher, and arranged to give him an exhibition. Mr. Keppell is confident in advance that the amateurs of etching will echo his interest in the new work.

The Randall Davey pictures in the Macbeth Galleries are primarily student pictures. They are not only distinctly for art students but by one.



MONASTERY OF ARAGON, BY ZULOAGA.
Owned by Willard D. Straight. Photo courtesy of Kraushaar Gallery.

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